

Title Vegetative and reproductive evaluation of hot peppers under black and plastic mulch

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Abstract

Hot pepper is a summer vegetable in southern Punjab and Sindh, Pakistan. In recent years, the area under protected cultivation of vegetables like hot pepper, tomato and cucumber in plastic tunnels is increasing steadily. The climate of Punjab is suitable for the use of many simple plastic tunnels for indoor vegetable production, which is well suited for the purposes of over-bridging the gap in vegetable markets during cool months, or to extend the season to be earlier than the produce of the open field. Studies were conducted to assess the efficacy of plastic mulch on growth and yield of two hot pepper hybrids, viz., Sky Red and Maha in simple plastic tunnels. The treatments were black plastic mulch, clear plastic mulch and bare soil, as control. The experimental design was factorial arranged in a randomized complete block design (RCBD) with three replications. Plants of both hybrids mulched with black plastic showed significantly better vegetative growth (plant height, leaf area etc) and fruit yield. However, clear plastic mulch reduced the number of days to first flower. Both Sky Red and Maha gave 6.62 % and 7.44 % more yield on black plastic mulch as compared to clear plastic mulch and 39.56 % and 36.49 % when compared with bare soil. Overall results indicated that the use of black plastic mulch in plastic tunnels is ideal for better growth and yield of hot peppers with good fruit quality.